

## RIVERSIDE HISTORY

### ***Introduction***

Riverside is a rapidly growing city of 283,247. Currently ranking as the **eleventh largest city in California**, with an annual growth rate of one percent, Riverside is the center of the Southern California Region known as the “Inland Empire”, a region having the population equivalent to the entire state of Connecticut and an economy comparable to that of the entire state of Kansas. The City possesses a large and diverse economy with the Inland Empire region’s largest number of businesses and total jobs.

The city is also home to four internationally recognized colleges and universities with a current student population of approximately 40,000, including the prestigious University of California, Riverside. The city is located approximately 60 miles east of downtown Los Angeles and is centrally placed within a short distance from the Coachella Valley, San Bernardino Mountains, Southern California Beaches, and Ontario International Airport.

### ***Heritage***

Founded in 1870 by John North and a group of Easterners, Riverside was built on land that was once a Spanish Rancho. The first orange trees were planted in 1871, but the citrus industry Riverside is famous for began two years later when Eliza Tibbets received two Brazilian naval orange trees sent to her by a friend at the Department of Agriculture in Washington. The trees thrived in the Southern California climate and the naval orange industry grew rapidly.

Within a few years, the successful cultivation of the newly discovered naval orange led to a California Gold Rush of a different kind: the establishment of the Citrus Industry. By 1882, there were more than half a million citrus trees in California, almost half of which were in Riverside. The development of refrigerated railroad cars and innovative irrigation systems established Riverside as the wealthiest city per capita by 1895.

As the city prospered, a small guest hotel designed by the popular Mission Revival style grew to become the world famous Mission Inn, favored by presidents, royalty and movie stars. Postcards of lush orange groves, swimming pools, and magnificent homes have attracted vacationers and entrepreneurs throughout the years. Victoria Avenue with its landmark homes serves as a reminder of European investors who settled here.

Riverside’s citizens are proud of the City’s unique character born from a tradition of careful planning, from it’s carefully laid out historic Mile Square to it’s 1924 Civic Center designed by the same planner responsible for San Francisco’s Civic Center, Charles Cheney.

## ***Riverside History (continued)***

Through the City's Office of Historic Preservation, Riverside is committed to preserving the past as a firm foundation for the future. The City Council and other institutions have designated over 110 City Landmarks, 20 National Register Sites and 2 National Historic Landmarks, all offering enjoyment and education for city residents and visitors.



The unique City Raincross Symbol is derived from combining a replica of the mass bell used by Father Junipero Serra, missionary priest and founder of the California Missions, and the cross to which the Navajo and Central American Indians prayed for rain. The “Raincross” is used extensively throughout Riverside in its architecture and holds a prominent spot on the city flag and has been identified with Riverside since 1907.